ENCOURAGE POSITIVE SCRATCHING BEHAVIOUR

Cat use their claws to defend, to climb, to exercise, to mark territory, as well as for an emotional release if it is stressed or excited. This is a natural, healthy, and necessary activity for all cats and an essential exercise to maintain healthy muscles.

Encourage healthy and appropriate scratching by providing a good quality scratching post and use an appropriate nail trimmer to carefully clip only the clear portion of the nail.

Place the post beside any piece of furniture that your cat seems to like to scratch and cover any area or piece of furniture that your cat has chosen to scratch with double-sided tape, which can act as a deterrent.

KEEP YOUR CAT INDOORS

Many of our rescue cats were discovered outside after having been abandoned or living the rough street life. These cats are ready to enjoy the rest of their lives in indoor comfort. Keeping your cat inside protects them from further dangers and trauma. Outdoor cats are subjected to the dangers of traffic, poisonous substances, injuries from other animals and cruelty from humans, and diseases. By allowing your adopted rescue cat to go outside, chances increase of them getting ill, attacked, or lost.

SIGNS YOUR CAT MAY BE SICK

Cats are creatures of habit and routine, so if something seems "off" or unusual for your cat, it might be a sign to take them to the vet.

Consider the following questions:

- Are there changes to eating or drinking? Appetite loss, weight loss despite a good appetite, or drinking far more than normal can all be signs of health problems. Appetite loss for more than two days can be dangerous.
- Are there changes to your cat's normal behaviour? If your cat is suddenly meowing all night, eliminating outside the litter box, or lethargic and unusually sleepy, these are all indications of a medical condition that should be addressed.
- Are there physical changes? Lumps, drooling, swollen gums, limping, runny eyes or nose, and congestion can all be signs it's time for a medical check-up.

If your cat is showing signs of distress take him/her to the emergency vet immediately.

This information is provided for reference only and should not be substituted for medical advice from your veterinarian.

Action Volunteers for Animals (AVA) is an all-volunteer-run charitable animal rescue dedicated to helping stray and feral animals live healthy and happy lives.

FOLLOW US ONLINE

Instagram – **@avacatrescue** Facebook – **@ActionVolunteersForAnimals**
Twitter – **@avacatrescue**

Learn more about AVA, fill out an adoption form, or make a donation at:

avacats.org

ACTION VOLUNTEERS FOR ANIMALS

Preparing For a New Cat

The information provided here is designed to help you prepare and welcome your new feline companion into your home and life

Congratulations on adopting a new cat!

Whether you're a first-time cat guardian or bringing a new cat into your life after an extended time without one, this guide has the essential information you need for bringing a cat into your home and help them live their best life.

PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Before you bring your new cat(s) or kitten(s) home, review this checklist to make sure you have all the necessary supplies ready.

- Sanctuary/safe room
- Wet and dry food
- Unscented litter
- Litter box and scoop
- Three (3) sturdy ceramic or metal bowls – one for water, one each for wet and dry food
- Cat treats
- Toys (interactive and self-play)
- Scratching post (vertical or horizontal) and/or cat tree
- Cat carrier – hard plastic or sturdy soft-sided carrier
- Cat brush/comb
- Nail clippers
- Cat bedding
- Veterinarian – close to home, with extended weekend and evening hours, if possible

SETTING UP A SAFE ROOM/SANCTUARY ROOM

For the first 7–10 days, your cat will need their own space — usually a spare bedroom or bathroom with a latching door, where you can keep the cat safe and comfortable while they adjust to the new surroundings and family members. Keep your new cat isolated from other family pets during this time. You and your family should interact with the cat within the safe room frequently, offering play and gentle affection.

Cat-proof your safe room — removing any breakable or potentially hazardous items — and set up the room with all the essentials. In addition to food and water, litter box, and bedding, the safe room would ideally have a secure window for outside viewing and a safe hiding spot, such as their cat carrier.

Once your cat seems to have adjusted well to the safe room, allow them to explore new spaces around the house. For shy cats, build their confidence by playing with them and rewarding their positive exploration in new spaces.

Sounds can be a stress trigger for many cats. Help your new cat adjust by exposing them to as many of the normal household noises as possible. Start with radio/TV with the volume on low. Work up to running the electric vacuum briefly near the safe room but behind the closed door.

CAT-PROOFING YOUR HOME

Cats are natural explorers and their curiosity often leads to finding new hiding places, chewing or licking objects or surfaces, and using any loose item as a toy. The secret to cat-proofing your home is to look at each room through their eyes. Get down on the floor and see the world from their view — if anything looks like it might make a great toy or is potentially harmful, remove it.

All surfaces in the safe room should be wiped down with a diluted water/bleach solution of 10% bleach (cup bleach to a gallon of water) or Scrubbing Bubbles. Cleaners containing the active ingredient Phenol (Lysol, Pine Sol, 409, Spic and Span) are highly toxic to both kittens and cats.

SAFETY CHECKLIST

- Remove all things that a cat might break or harmful substances it might ingest.
- Keep all craft supplies such as needles, thread, and yarn in closed containers These can be fatal if swallowed.
- Secure window blinds so the cat cannot get tangled up in the cord or strangled.
- Ensure that all windows have screens on them that are in good repair.
- Clear the floor of rubber bands, ribbon, and string. These are hazardous when ingested and can require surgery.
- Keep cupboard doors and dresser drawers securely closed.
- Cover electrical cords with aluminum foil or cord wraps to prevent the cat from chewing.
- Make sure that each heating and air vent is enclosed with a secure metal cover.
- Remove any living plants from the safe room/household that may be toxic or harmful.
- Ensure that all toilet lids are down at all times to prevent the cat from drinking or playing.
- For carpeted floors, consider using a vinyl covering or tarp over the area in the safe room.
- Keep appliances like refrigerators and clothes dryers closed and block any holes that a cat could climb inside for hiding.
- Keep balcony doors closed and the balcony off-limits to your cat at all times.

FELINE DIETARY NEEDS

Cats are obligate carnivores, which means they need most of their calories from animal protein. It's best to select a food that has named animal protein, like chicken or turkey, as the top ingredients, and ones with fewer byproducts, fillers and carbohydrates like corn.

Unless directed otherwise by a vet, your cat will need both wet (canned) and dry food. Wet food should be given each day to help cats stay properly hydrated and avoid health problems like urinary tract infections and kidney disease. Serve wet food at room temperature when possible as cats may be finicky about cold food.

Cat food found in grocery stores offers limited nutrition and is available in limited selection. For higher quality food, shop at a reputable pet store or your veterinarian's clinic. Depending on age and health, your cat may require a special diet that is only available through your vet. Monitor your cat's eating habits daily to ensure that all is well; follow the daily recommended amounts on the pet food packaging to avoid overfeeding.

Avoid packaged/processed treats on a daily basis; too many treats can impact appetite.

Always provide fresh water daily.

LITTER AND PROPER ELIMINATION

Start your cat with a fresh new litter box that is uncovered and easily accessible in quiet, low-traffic areas, away from doors and food dishes. The general rule is to keep one litter box per cat in the household, plus one extra.

Fill the litter box with unscented clumping litter, using enough to cover the bottom of the box where the cat can scratch through to the bottom. If you need to try a different brand or type of litter, start mixing a small ratio of new litter to the old and make the transition slowly to gauge your cat's reaction.

Scoop the litter box once per day, adding more litter as needed. Wash the litter box with warm soapy water once a month, replacing all the litter.

Monitor for any signs of diarrhea, constipation, straining to urinate or excessive urination. If you are concerned, check with your vet immediately.